

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 131100Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO USIA WASHDC

SECSTATE WASHDC 7636

UNCLAS STOCKHOLM 2672

STATE ALSO FOR EUR/NE

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR SMITH'S MEETING WITH THE PRESS

ON MAY 7 AMBASSADOR SMITH HELD AN INFORMAL USIS-INITIATED MEETING WITH THE PRESS AT THE RESIDENCE. FIFTEEN SELECTED JOURNALISTS REPRESENTING THE MAJOR SWEDISH NEWSPAPERS, NEWS SERVICES, THE SWEDISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION, RADIO AND TV, AS WELL AS THE TWO AMERICAN WIRE SERVICES, AP AND UPI, AND TIME AND NEWSWEEK WERE INVITED TO DISCUSS WITH THE AMBASSADOR HOW HE VIEWED HIS NEW MISSION TO SWEDEN. THE AMBASSADOR HAD JUST PRESENTED CREDENTIALS TO KING CARL GUSTAF THE SAME DAY.

THE AMBASSADOR, WITH MRS. SMITH AT HIS SIDE, FIELDDED A SERIES OF QUESTIONS ON SWEDISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS, AMERICAN POLITICS AND POLICIES, WORLD ISSUES OF CONCERN TO BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND SWEDEN, AND HIS PERSONAL BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE IN A PLEASANT AND RELAXED MANNER.

THE PRESS MEETING WAS REPORTED IN A NUMBER OF NEWSPAPERS THROUGHOUT SWEDEN. THE GENERAL TONE OF REPORTS WAS FRIENDLY ALTHOUGH AT LEAST ONE OF THE JOURNALISTS COULD NOT REFRAIN FROM A FACETIOUS COMMENT OR TWO.

INDEPENDENT LIBERAL DAGENS NYHETER, WHICH IN THE PAST HAS BEEN ONE OF OUR STRONGEST CRITICS SAID: "IF THE OLD MOVIE STAR WILLIAM HOLDEN WERE AMBASSADOR, HE WOULD PROBABLY LOOK SOMEWHAT LIKE THE UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE IN SWEDEN: DAVID SMITH. HE IS GOOD LOOKING IN HIS PIN-STRIPED

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SUIT WITH HAIR GREYING AT THE TEMPLES AND AN ETERNAL SMILE.

ON HIS THIRD DAY AS AMBASSADOR IN STOCKHOLM HE RECEIVED
THE PRESS. "THE PERIOD OF COOL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE
UNITED STATES AND SWEDEN IS IN THE PAST" HE SAID
DECISIVELY... THE DAYS OF THE VIETNAM WAR WHEN THE AMERICAN
AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE WAS STONED EVERY NOW AND THEN SEEMED
LIKE A LONG TIME AGO."

ALL OF THE REPORTS INCLUDED A NUMBER OF QUOTES FROM THE
AMBASSADOR AND MENTIONED HIS BACKGROUND, SERVICE IN THE
EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION, AND CONTACTS WITH SWEDEN AND
SWEDES BEFORE HE CAME TO STOCKHOLM.

IN BRIEF, THIS ON-THE-RECORD CONFERENCE WAS SUCCESSFUL IN
INTRODUCING THE AMBASSADOR TO THE SWEDISH PUBLIC
AND MEDIA AS AN OUTGOING, POSITIVE DIPLOMAT VITALLY
INTERESTED IN FURTHERING GOOD SWEDISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS.
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